

[Vaidyasastrakusala Dr. (Mrs.) M. Poonen Lukose.]

Council stated how in Mysore modern facilities and up-to-date treatment was made possible by the philanthropy of public spirited men and women and how during the last 15 years the people of Mysore had contributed not less than 25 lakhs of rupees for this purpose. In Travancore a beginning has been made by the initiative taken by the Dewan-President. Many others have followed his example and general and special wards have been donated by the public. No less than 8 or ten memorial wards are in progress now. But hereafter we want money and more money and still more money to meet urgent needs of the institutions. Therefore, Sir, I am really happy that this House has appreciated the principle that underlies this scheme of charging fees for medicines.

**Mr. Kallur Narayana Pillai :** ഞാൻ പ്രസ്താവിച്ച പ്രകാരം മുള്ള സർക്യൂലർ ഉണ്ടെങ്കിൽ അതിന്റെ നിഷ്കഷം എത്രത്തോളമുണ്ടെന്നു അറുത്താൽ കൊള്ളാം.

**Vaidyasastrakusala Dr. (Mrs.) M. Poonen Lukose :** There was a circular, Sir, about three or four years ago that medical officers should not leave their institutions during hospital hours. But it was felt that medical officers would use their discretion in this matter. This was already brought to my notice by the honourable member Mr. Kallur Narayana Pillai himself and I had told him what had done. I have not cancelled the circular, but medical officers have been instructed about attending to emergencies outside hospital during duty hours. The question of deciding what is urgent and what is not is sometimes a matter of difficulty.

The question that the Medical Department be granted a sum of Rs. 10,65,692 was then put and carried and the grant was made.

DEMAND NO. XXVIII—COMMERCIAL TRANSPORT—

Rs. 21,49,799.

**Mr. E. G. Salter. (Director of Transport) :** Sir, I rise to move for a grant not exceeding Rs. 21,49,799 under Demand XXVIII—Commercial Transport.

**President :** I find that we have 27 minutes more and I can call upon three honourable members to speak and give them five minutes each.

**Mr. K. K. Kuruvilla :** Sir, I wish to bring to the notice of the House one or two things. The first of course is the complaint, especially from respectable men that there are no porters in these transport buses to take their luggage in or to take their luggage out. I heard that only a couple of weeks ago a respectable lady travelled from Trivandrum to Kottayam. She had a big box and it had to be taken out to Kottarakara. The conductor of the bus refused to help her.

**Mr. E. G. Salter :** May I suggest that specific cases where the conductors refuse to help the passengers with their luggages may be brought to my notice? When a general complaint is made in the manner in which it is now done, I am absolutely powerless. I can assure honourable members that if specific cases are brought to my notice severe disciplinary action would be taken against the members of the Transport Staff who are responsible. But if such information is not given to me, I am absolutely powerless.

**Mr. K. K. Kuruvilla :** Sir, I have made a general complaint and mentioned an instance to show that unless porters are allowed to go with the buses it is impossible for the passengers to get help. These porters need not be paid by Government at all. If they take the luggage of any passenger out or in, that passenger will pay. I think, Sir, that if this system is tried it will prove of very great advantage to the passengers. I do not see why the conductor should take out or take in the luggage of the passengers, unless a particular conductor wants to be kind to and wants to treat the passengers respectfully. So, unless there is provision for this particular purpose, I do not see how the inconvenience of the passengers could be got over.

Another point that I wish to speak about is that the conductors or the inspectors have no room to sit anywhere and that the shoulders of the passengers seated in the front seats more often become comfortable seats for these conductors and inspectors. These people, as they have no seats to sit, want to lean somewhere and I quite sympathise with them. But as they lean on the backs of the seats which are occupied by passengers, it unfortunately happens that the burden falls on the shoulders of the respectable passengers. I have asked some of these conductors why seats are not provided for them and I was told that the Superintendent wants them to stand and watch buses as they come and go. I hope this will receive the consideration of the Superintendent.

I want to speak about another thing also. I got a letter only this morning from a particular person. This is in Malayalam which I want to read.

**Mr. Kochickal P. Balakrishnan Tampi :** Is the honourable member in order in reading some part of a private letter unless he is prepared to place the whole letter on the table?

**President :** I take it that what he proposes to do is to refresh his memory by advertence to that letter and himself take responsibility for the statement contained in that letter. That is the idea, I suppose.

**Mr. K. K. Kuruvilla :** Yes, Sir.

“തിരുവല്ലയിൽനിന്നും ചങ്ങനാശേരിക്കു നാലു ചക്രം കൂലി എണ്ണുതിയിരിക്കുന്നു. എന്നാൽ കവലയിൽനിന്നു രണ്ടോ മൂന്നോ ഫർലാം തികച്ചു....

**President:** The drawback in that is the honourable member who has to reply will not understand unless the honourable members will translate it.

**Mr. K. K. Kuruvilla:** It is said that from Tiruvalla Kavala to Changanacherry Kavala the fare is 4 chackrams, but that the fare is only 3 chackrams up to the gate of the N. S. S. School. Most people get down at Changanacherry Kavala and therefore have to pay 4 chackrams.

Sir, that is an advantage which the Transport Superintendent takes for his own benefit at the sacrifice of the common people. If the travellers had known that the fare paid by them extends only up to the N. S. S. School gate, they will get down there. It is at the Changanacherry Kavala people get down generally and the charge fixed is up to that place. The route is Tiruvella to Changanacherry Kavala. Instead of making travellers pay to some three furlongs south of the Changanacherry Kavala and three furlongs north of it also, the proportionate advantage is not derived by the travellers. Several difficulties like that could be instanced here. My point, therefore, is that there should at least be boards put up saying exactly the fare and the place it covers.

**President:** It is exactly for this kind of arrangement the Transport Board will render the greatest possible assistance. When the Board points out the local difficulties, the Director of Transport will only be too glad to remedy them according to the instructions of the Board.

**Mr. K. M. Kesavan:** Sir, I also support the Demand. I have already assured the House that just like the Government, the public are also very anxious about the proper administration of this department. One constructive suggestion that I have to point out is this:— Some two months ago I happened to travel in one of the Transport buses from Quilon to Trivandrum. On the way, a few miles from Quilon, the bus came to grief. The chauffeur was not allowed to attend to the break-down. It was only a very slight thing, after all. The passengers had necessarily to wait for a long time till the bus was repaired. The fitter who was conversant with the mechanism came to the scene after two or three hours and till then the passengers had to wait. The necessary repair was done to the machine and the bus was put in order. What I wish to point out is that it will be a healthy rule if, before the appointment of drivers, insistence is made that only such men will be appointed as are able to attend to the small disorders like the one I experienced during the travel. In this case the disorder was, that a nut became loose and it had to be tightened. That was all. It should be noted that there was no spanner in the bus for the driver with which he could tighten the nut.

**Mr. T. K. Kittan:** മോട്ടോറിന്റെ യന്ത്രത്തിന് കേടുവന്നു എന്താണോ പറയുന്നത്?

**Mr. K. M. Kesavan :** അതെ.

**Mr. T. K. Kittan :** യന്ത്രങ്ങൾ സാധാരണയായി കേടുവരാറുള്ളതല്ലേ? ചില പടക്കപ്പലുകൾക്കു കേടു വന്നാൽ കഥ തർന്നുതന്നെ.

**Mr. K. M. Kesavan :** ബഹുമാനപ്പെട്ട മെമ്പർ ഞാൻ പറഞ്ഞത് മനസിലാക്കിയില്ല.

**Mr. T. K. Kittan :** എനിക്കു മനസിലായി.

ഞാനും വാഹനങ്ങളിൽ സഞ്ചരിച്ചിട്ടുണ്ട്. യന്ത്രങ്ങൾക്കു കേടു വന്നാൽ എന്തുചെയ്യും? സഹിക്കുകയെ നിവൃത്തിയുള്ളൂ.

**Mr. K. M. Kesavan :** Sir, before each bus leaves the garage it is examined whether it will work properly. After that it leaves the garage. What I want to lay stress on in this connection is that if a bus gets into disorder on its journey and if the disorder is such as could be attended to by the driver, the repairing of it may be entrusted with him. That will afford considerable relief to the travelling public. At the time I travelled when there happened a break-down, as I said, there was a delay for about three hours. In the meanwhile another bus came up; but there was no room for us to get into it as it was already crowded.

**Mr. James Fletcher :** May I ask, by allowing the drivers to meddle with the machines, will it not bring more trouble than what my friend referred to?

**Mr. K. M. Kesavan :** That is true to a very large extent if the disorder is of a serious nature. I was only saying that with regard to slight disorders which even a layman could attend to with the help of a spanner the driver may be allowed to repair them. But if the driver is definitely forbidden to look into the repairs, there must be some remedy suggested and it is towards that that my suggestion applies. Had not the bus been interrupted, the passengers could have gone to their destination at the proper time. The question of waiting in the event of a break-down on roads gives people serious hardship. Sometimes that brings about serious loss to passengers.

Another matter is, and I am ashamed to mention it not only to the departmental head but to this House that when I got into one of the buses that ply in the town, I found the seat very nasty, so much so I could not even touch it. If such is the standard of cleanliness maintained in the department in respect of town bus, I need not say anything about the condition of buses that ply in the interior.

**Mr. V. Sankara Menon :** What was in the seat?

**Mr. K. M. Kesavan :** Dirt, Sir, accumulation of dirt. The cushion and the cover were full of dirt.

**President :** The best thing in such cases would be for the honourable member to have complained to the Director of Transport immediately it is known.

**Mr. K. M. Kesavan :** This took place only yesterday. Therefore, Sir, I should draw the attention of the Director of Transport to maintain a standard of cleanliness in buses wherein passengers like the honourable members of the Legislature also will have to travel and see that no room is given for such complaints.

**Mr. N. Krishna Aiyar (Vaikom, Kottayam and Changancherry cum Peermade) :** In supporting the Demand, I would urge the necessity of extension and expansion of lines of the Transport scheme. I am already aware that Government is contemplating the expansion of the lines to the different parts of the State, starting from the Cape to North Travancore. The line has already reached as far as Kottayam and I believe the opening up of further lines from Kottayam is under contemplation. But there is a misapprehension among the public that the department is not bringing in as much revenue to the State as was contemplated.

**Mr. T. Krishna Pillai :** Is it not a fact that the department being a commercial one the Government should not consider it as a remunerative concern and that therefore the Government should look to the giving of more convenience to the travelling public?

**Mr. N. Krishna Aiyar :** Being a commercial department it should conduce not only to enhancement of revenue to Government, but should also look to the convenience of the public. My only apprehension is that when a large proportion of profits was expected from the working of the department, the expectations have not been reached fully. Therefore I think greater attention must be paid to bring economy in the working of the department as also in certain other details.

Regarding the expansion of transport service I would suggest that Government should take up immediately water transport also. There are quite a large number of backwaters in this State and especially during monsoon seasons the travelling public experience much hardship. Either the boats are not properly constructed or their mechanism, though tested yearly and certified, is defective. Such boats often break-down in the middle of the journey and thereby considerable difficulties are caused to the travelling public.

**Mr. Kallur Narayana Pillai :** അതിന് തത്സമയത്തുതന്നെ ഗവണ്മെന്റ് വിചാരിച്ചാൽ പോരാ എന്നറിയാമല്ലോ.

**Mr. N. Krishna Aiyar :** Only those lines within Travancore must be taken up immediately and negotiations proceeded with for the opening up of other lines also gradually.

**Mr. T. Krishna Pillai :** I rise to support the Demand. I simply wish to draw the attention of Government as well as the Director of Transport that they should not be obsessed with the idea that the Transport Department being a commercial enterprise mainly exists for bringing about revenue to Government. In my opinion that department should give as far as possible its attention in the matter of affording sufficient convenience to the travelling public. In fact a series of interpellations were sent up to Government regarding the inconvenience caused to the travelling public on account of the manner and method in which Transport Service is functioning at present. I would, therefore, urge that the department should look more to the comfort and convenience of the public than for enhancing revenue to Government and take credit that it is the best revenue yielding department. I have nothing more to add further than this to what I have already stated during the general discussion of the budget; to which also I now draw the earnest attention of the honourable member, the Director of State Transport.

**Mr. E. G. Salter :** Sir, before I deal with the general points raised today, I would like to take this opportunity for clearing certain misapprehensions which appear to exist in the minds of certain members of both this House and the other House.

The drop in the net receipts of the Transport Department as compared with the Budget Estimates for 1115 appears to have occasioned some misgivings and judging from the remarks of certain honourable members the question that arises is "Is there anything fundamentally wrong with the Transport Department?"

Before any attempt is made to answer this question, I should like to explain a few matters in connection with the figures which have given rise to these misgivings.

The estimates for 1115 submitted to the Legislature in Karkatakam 1114 provided for an estimated net revenue of Rs. 2,6,736, but the revised estimates show a reduction of Rs. 40,200.

Members will appreciate that the estimates were prepared before the out-break of war when many of us believed and all of us hoped that the war clouds then collecting would blow over. Now the most accurate trade barometer is contained in the traffic returns of a passenger transport undertaking in that they indicate the first reaction to trade depression and, conversely, to a trade boom, that is to say, any reduction in employment figures or even a likelihood of such reduction, reacts first of all in the number of passengers carried in the transport undertakings of the areas affected. This is a universally accepted theory and is advanced by that recognised world authority on passenger transport, the Rt. Hon. Lord Ashfield, Vol. XVI. No. 7

[Mr. E. G. Salter.]

Chairman of the London Passenger Transport Board. I do not need to dwell on the effect that the war has had on the trade of Travancore; Government and the Legislature have devoted very considerable thought and attention to the distress which has manifested itself in the staple industry of the country. Are we to wonder if the traffic returns of the Transport Department react to the slump in trade brought about solely as a result of the war?

Now, for the other side of the ledger. There is scarcely a single commodity used by the Transport Department in actual operation which can be said to be indigenous. I suppose I am right in saying that not less than 90 per cent of its requirements have to be imported. Every honourable member knows that the cost of shipping freight and insurance have risen to very high figures, which, in addition to the shortage of manufactured articles, has resulted in increased cost varying from 25 to 150 per cent. To quote a few, Petrol has increased 25 per cent Diesel Oil 90 per cent., Oils and Grease 25 per cent, Spare Parts from 30 per cent to 150 per cent. One honourable member expressed the opinion that the increase of a few annas per gallon on petrol would not make much difference. On the present consumption of the Department one anna increase means Rs. 26,000 per year additional operating costs. I do not think I need elaborate further. I have sought to show how and why receipts have fallen and costs have increased, thus narrowing the margin between them to the extent indicated by the estimates. All this looks very black, but permit me now to show you the other side of the picture.

**Mr. T. Krishna Pillai :** I wish to know the result of the experiments for finding out a substitute for petrol?

**Mr. E. G. Salter :** I will answer that point later. Do you judge the financial stability of a commercial undertaking by examining its bank pass book? Surely it is the Balance Sheet and Profit and Loss Account which reveal the true state of affairs. If a business spends more in any one year than its receipts during that period, do you doubt the financial status of the business? But this is exactly what the honourable members are doing in respect of the Transport Department. The figures submitted by the Financial Secretary are purely and simply those of a Bank Pass Book—they show the gross income and the gross expenditure and by deduction, the net income, but this is not a correct figure. On the 31st of Karkatakam we have in stock petrol, oil etc., to carry on service next day. We have spare parts in stock (Rs. 25,000 worth) all of which have been paid for during 1115. These are assets which find

no place in the budget estimates, although their cost is debited to working expenses for 1115. If we permitted ourselves to run right out of stock of all our requirements, (a fatal mistake in the present circumstances), may we not state quite truthfully that our working expenses would have been reduced and our net profit increased by this amount in which event, our profit is Rs. 65 000 and not Rs. 40,000. There is yet another matter. If you invest Re. 1 lakh in Government securities you expect, and will receive, something in the nature of Rs. 3,000 per year by way of interest. If, however, you invest Re 1 lakh in a business of your own from which you make a profit of Rs 10,000, would you say "My profit is only Rs. 7,000 because I could have got Rs. 3,000 from investment in Government Securities." I doubt if the Income Tax authorities would accept such methods of accountancy, but this is exactly what you do to the Transport Department accounts. The honourable members will observe that a sum of Rs. 36,000 is charged against the profits of the Department as interest payable to Government but as Government are the proprietors of the Transport Department, surely this figure must be added to the profit making a total of Rs. 1,01,000, or 10 per cent of the total investment and that, mark you, with a war on.

Referring to depreciation, we have a sum of nearly Rs. 3½ lakhs standing to the credit of the Department at the end of this year, nearly enough to pay for an entirely new fleet of vehicles after only 2½ years' operation. We have in addition an Insurance Fund of Rs. 45,851 and a General Reserve of Rs. 31,000. As these amounts are paid into the Treasury, may they not be regarded as repayment of Capital? (Incidentally, this is the method adopted by the Ceylon State Railways). If we accept this method as a reasonable one, the present capital investment by Government is reduced to Rs. 5,80,000 on which the Transport Department has yielded a return of Rs. 1,01,000 or 17½ per cent.

**Mr. Kottur Kunjukrishna Pillai :** May I know whether it is so unusual in a commercial department to provide for depreciation fund, interest charges, insurance fund etc., and then show the profits of that department?

**Mr. E. G. Salter :** I am suggesting, Sir, that charging of interest on capitals before arriving at profits is wrong.

How many commercial undertakings today can show such figures? I venture to state that after only 2½ years' working there are none. These are the considerations which interest investors and decide their actions in the purchase of shares in a limited company, not an examination of their bank pass-books, however detailed it may be.

[Mr. E. G. Salter.]

Having had the opportunity of dilating upon the financial standing of the Transport Department, I now revert to the original question "Is there anything fundamentally wrong with the Transport Department?" I leave the verdict in the hands of the honourable members.

Now, what of the future? We have estimated for an expenditure of nearly Rs. 5½ lakhs for petrol next year. That presupposes that there will be no increase of price during that period, but I am afraid that, in the present international situation, it is too much to hope.

The honourable members will be aware that the Transport Department has been conducting a series of experiments during the past year for operating vehicles on indigenous fuel. I have very great hope of success in that experiment which, if it can be developed, will result in very considerable ending.

In respect of the suggestions that have emanated from the honourable members for improving conveniences to the travelling public, I may inform them that I am devoting my almost undivided attention to the experiments I have referred to and if, in the working out of the manifold problems associated with these experiments I am forced to the necessity temporarily to set aside the introduction of these improvements, I crave the indulgence of the honourable members.

**President:** The time for the Demand having expired, the question before the House is that Government be granted Rs. 21,49,799 under Demand XXVIII—Commercial Transport.

The motion was put to vote and carried.

The Demand was passed and the Grant was made.

As the time allotted for the Demands had lapsed the following Demands were put to vote and carried :—

|                                                                         | Rs.      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| Demand No. XVI—Industries including Clay Refining and Porcelain Factory | 4,43,800 |
| Do. XVII—Co-operative Department                                        | 92,300   |
| Do. XVIII—Uplift of Backward Communities                                | 41,278   |
| Do. XIX—Ayurveda                                                        | 85,398   |
| Do. XX—Forests                                                          | 8,44,335 |
| Do. XXI—Registration                                                    | 3,27,700 |
| Do. XXII—Stamps                                                         | 71,700   |
| Do. XXIII—Currency and Mint                                             | 5,500    |
| Do. XXIV—Ports                                                          | 28,100   |

|                                                                       | Rs.      |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| Demand No. XXV—Jails                                                  | 1,11,300 |
| Do. XXVI—State Charities                                              | 10,000   |
| Do. XXVII—Stationery and Printing                                     | 3,40,800 |
| Do. XXIX—Scientific and Miscellaneous<br>Departments excluding Census | 1,03,900 |
| Do. XXX—Miscellaneous Charges                                         | 1,60,900 |
| Do. XXXI—Anchal Department                                            | 4,00,750 |
| Do. XXXII—Capital Expenditure not<br>charged to Revenue—Rail-<br>ways | 22,900   |
| Do. XXXIII—Loans—Agricultural loans                                   | 50,000   |
| Do. XXXIV—Loans—Industrial loans                                      | 10,000   |
| Do. XXXV—Loans—Other loans and Ad-<br>vances                          | 5,97,200 |
| Do. XXXVI—Debt Heads—Advances                                         | 48,700   |
| Do. XXXVII—Debt Head—Coinage Account                                  | 4,00,000 |

**President:** The House will now adjourn and meet again at 2 P. M.

The House adjourned for lunch at 1-2 P. M. and re-assembled at 2 P. M. with the President in the Chair.

#### New Member.

Mr. S. K. Pillai took the oath and signed the Rolls.

#### LEGISLATIVE BUSINESS—(contd.)

##### THE TRAVANCORE DEBT RELIEF BILL—(contd.)

**Mr. N. Krishna Aiyar:** Sir, I move the following amendment:—

In Clause 9, sub-clause (2) (a) alter "seventy-five" as "eighty-five" and alter "six years" as "two years."

Sir, it is not with a view to bargain that I move this amendment. It is only with the view that the creditor may get the principal amount at least in certain cases.

**Mr. M. K. Ananthasiva Aiyar:** I second it.

**Mr. Puthupally S. Krishna Pillai:** Sir, I oppose it. I expressed sufficiently clearly the day before yesterday as to why these figures could not be interfered with. Mr. Krishna Iyer has said that the object underlying the amendment is to leave the principal sum untouched. It is certainly not the intention of the framer of the Bill that no principal should in any event be touched. I also pointed out that the proposal that is made is very much more advantageous to the Travancore creditor than the creditors elsewhere. I oppose the amendment.

The amendment was put to vote and lost.